



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## **1351.0.55.015 - Research Paper: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas: Introduction, Use and Future Directions, Sep 2006**

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## Summary

### About this Release

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) are measures which summarise a range of socio-economic variables associated with disadvantage. These indexes are compiled at the Census Collection District (CD) level, and may be used to rank CDs according to the general socio-economic well-being of residents. In this paper we discuss three important features of SEIFA. First, SEIFA scores are a measure of relative disadvantage. Second, SEIFA scores are areal level indexes and should not be presumed to apply to all individuals living within the area. Third, SEIFA scores are calculated at the CD level and great care is required when interpreting scores which have been aggregated to larger geographical areas. We provide examples of the use of SEIFA to analyse the distribution of relative disadvantage within larger areas. Using data from the National Health Survey 2004-05, we also show that SEIFA scores correlate with the proportion of people living in an area who report poor health, obesity and other health risk factors.

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